

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

1. Diversity is not sufficiently measured in a context of commercial competition. There is no guarantee that what can succeed in a free market is what is diverse. In fact, I believe any in depth and honest examination of the history of broadcast would indicate that commercial success and diversity are in almost diametric opposition. As much was presumably recognized and honored in the creation of Public Broadcasting. The fundamental point is that I believe the government has a duty to fund otherwise commercially unviable communication.

2. While it is not impossible for chain and network owned properties to consider and respect local issues, there are serious problems with such widespread ownership. First, such chains and networks concentrate editorial power. This, by definition, stifles diversity. Second, the economic impact can be significant: capital eventually flows up the chain or network hierarchy, thus eventually leaving the local area.

3. While a proliferation of outlets for media may have occurred, broadcast TV could nevertheless be an important source of information, as long as diversity and local ownership is engendered. Furthermore, alternatives to broadcast TV such as cable or internet access come with a price tag which effectively excludes those with lower incomes from making use of the new outlets. If broadcast TV is to be reduced in stature such citizens will bear the brunt of the change. That would be patently undemocratic. Nelsen Media Research's Television Activity Report for 1st Q, 2001 indicates that broadcast networks have a larger market share than cable-only networks. Thus, the fact that cable is reported being in 77% of US homes does not mean broadcast networks have lost their influence. I mean only to indicate that the relationship between new media outlets and the significance of broadcast TV are not simple. (It would be better if broadcast TV were retained as a transmission medium, yet th!

e government revitalized e.g.: P

BS as a broadcast channel for diversity rather than leaving broadcast solely to the top commercial networks.)

4. I fail to see how any reasonable person could rationally, honestly and ethically argue that larger media companies in any way strengthen diverse reporting and analysis. An underlying principle of democracy is that while it might be theoretically possible for a perfect dictator to exist, the chances of a dictator not abusing power are so slim as to be negligible. That principle carries over directly into conglomeration or centralization of media since a democracy requires information to operate.

5. The transmission medium in no way guarantees diversity; economics are what drive diversity, not transmission technology. Thus, a proliferation of commercial cable networks does not indicate a proliferation of diverse viewpoints. It is the federal government's mandate (see Supreme Court's decision on Associated Press v. United States No. 57 Argued December 5, 6, 1944, Decided June 18, 1945) to ensure diversity. This means it cannot rely on the free market to drive diversity since that historically has never come to pass. Thus the FCC ought never consider new media outlets per se to indicate diversity.

6. In counting diversity, the commission cannot merely count every web site and cable channel available. Not each is equally used by the public; I do not mean to require that the FCC divine which web sites ought to be given preferential

treatment because of low usage, I only mean to indicate that enumerating channels is insufficient to characterize the state of diversity.